DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 447 587 EA 030 746

AUTHOR Morgan, Annie R., Ed.
TITLE How To Create Useful Transition Activities. Tips for Principals.
INSTITUTION National Association of Secondary School Principals, Reston, VA.
PUB DATE 1999-12-00
NOTE 4p.
AVAILABLE FROM The National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1904 Association Drive, Reston, VA 20191-1537 (Item Number 1809912, $2 members, $3 nonmembers). Tel: 703-860-0200; Fax: 703-476-5432; Web site: http://www.nassp.org.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Elementary Secondary Education; *Orientation; *Peer Influence; *Principals; Public Schools; Social Values; *Transitional Programs

ABSTRACT

The transition from elementary school to middle-level or from middle-level to high school is very difficult for many students. While some students are mature enough to deal with their fears on their own or ask for the help they need, many struggle through these transitional times. They may manifest their difficulties with sudden outbursts of inappropriate behavior, detachment from their new environment, or chronic illness. Although there are many differences between a sixth-grade and ninth-grade student, strategies to assist these students are very similar. The programs outlined here are not specific to any grade level and should be incorporated into an overall strategy that can be used in either elementary-to-middle or middle-to-high school transition. Educators are encouraged to adapt these ideas to fit their students' needs. (DFR)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original document.

ED 447 587

Tips for Principals

December 1999

from nassp

How To Create Useful Transition Activities

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

R. Farrace

2A

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

EA 030 746

Tips for Principals

December 1999

from nassp

How To Create Useful Transition Activities

The transition from elementary school to middle level, or middle level to high school is very difficult for many students. While some students are mature enough to deal with their fears on their own or ask for the help they need, many struggle through these transitional times. They may manifest their difficulties with sudden outbursts of inappropriate behavior, detachment from their new environment, or chronic illness. Although there are many differences between a sixth-grade and ninth-grade student (the entry grades of traditional middle level and high schools), strategies to assist these students are very similar. The programs outlined below are not specific to any grade level and should be incorporated into an overall strategy that can be used in either elementary-to-middle or middle-to-high school transition. Educators are encouraged to adapt these ideas to fit their students' needs.

Improving Social Awareness

Purpose

To enhance students' social skills by teaching an eight-step problem solving strategy that students can use in unfamiliar situations.

Strategy

1. Identify feelings.
2. Learn to put feelings into words.
3. Select goals.
4. Brainstorm alternative solutions to a problem.
5. Anticipate positive and negative consequences to proposed solutions.
6. Select a solution after considering the alternatives.
7. Create a detailed plan of necessary steps to put the solution into effect.
8. Think and reflect on how the plan is working.

When utilizing this eight-step strategy, the approach to transition must begin the year before the student moves to the next level and continue for at least two years after entry. In this way, the strategy continues to serve students as they encounter new and different stimuli.

Orientation Day

Purpose

To teach parents and students about the new school environment before a transition is actually made. Through this program, parents and students are introduced to faculty and staff members, become familiar with the physical structure of the new school, learn about the curriculum and homework expectations, and establish a positive family-school relationship.

Strategy

- Begin with a general assembly to review the day's itinerary.
- Dismiss to homeroom/advisory group to complete required forms, review rules and regulations, obtain student's schedule, and locate lockers.
- Go through an abbreviated schedule to familiarize students with classroom location.
- Conduct a luncheon, cookout, or snack session with faculty and staff.

Ten suggestions to help ensure a successful orientation day:

1. Mail a schedule of activities to the students' parents.
2. Hold meetings at varying times to accommodate work schedules.
3. Have parents and students sign in upon arrival.
4. Arrange a meeting with the student's counselor.
5. Provide parents and students with a copy of the school's handbook.
6. Use a telephone chain to notify and remind parents of the orientation day.
7. Schedule a "make-up" meeting for those parents who could not attend the orientation day.
8. Have the PTA/PTO president give a presentation.
9. Offer a "How To Help" session for parents while students locate their lockers and take the building tour.
10. Evaluate the program.

EA 030746

Tips for Principals

Student Reporters

Purpose
To lower the anxiety level of transition students prior to the spring building tour or new school year.

Strategy
Each exit grade teacher selects two students to act as reporters. The selected students work with classmates to generate questions about their upcoming transition. On a designated day, the student reporters travel to their new school where they are met by administrators and counselors. The student reporters are given a notebook and escorted to a homeroom. The reporters are then either given a class schedule to follow, or assigned another student to shadow. At the end of the day, the reporters gather to discuss their day and talk about any questions or concerns they have before completing a written evaluation of the experience. The following day, the students report their findings to their peers at the home school.

Peer Helpers

Purpose
To provide peer mentors who will give correct information and be helpful to incoming students.

Strategy
Administrators and faculty members at the entrance level identify students who are trustworthy and willing to work with incoming students. These students are then trained as peer mentors who work with the incoming students prior to

- their arrival. Some of the activities may include:
  Acting as tour guides for spring tours or orientation
- activities
  Attending all transition activities for incoming
- students so recognition is achieved
  Wearing an identifiable symbol so incoming students can easily find them during their first few weeks.

Conclusion
When constructing a transition program, educators should have various activities planned for students and their parents to lessen the anxiety of moving from familiar surroundings. However, it requires more than just activities to make a successful transition program. It also requires involvement from students, parents, teachers, administrators, and counselors. These individuals must design an overall strategy to assist students in their transition based on information gathered by school professionals, students, and parents. By following this approach, two successive transition programs may be completely different because specific needs will vary. The important goal is that students' needs are met, and they are prepared to deal successfully with the transition.

P. Lená Morgan is professor and chair of the Department of Educational Leadership and Foundations at the State University of West Georgia, Carrollton. She can be reached at lmorgan@westga.edu. **C. Jay Hertzog** is professor and dean of the College of Education at Slippery Rock (Pa.) University of Pennsylvania. He can be reached at jay.hertzog@sru.edu.
Together they are the founders and co-directors of the Center for Transition Studies at State University of West Georgia.

Tips for Principals
is a publication of
The National Association of Secondary School Principals
1904 Association Drive, Reston, Va. 20191-1537
Phone: (703) 860-0200; **Fax:** (703) 476-5432
World Wide Web: http://www.nassp.org
Copyright 1999 by NASSP

Curtis L. Voight, President
John Lewis, President-Elect
Gerald N. Tirozzi, Executive Director
Michelle C. Lampher, Director of Marketing and Communications
Robert N. Farrace, Associate Director for Publications
Annie R. Morgan, Editor
Jan Umphrey, Technical Editor
Tanya L. Seneff, Graphic Services Manager

Single copy, $2 (non-members: $3)
2–10 copies, $1.75 each (non-members: $2.75)
11–99 copies, $1.25 each (non-members $2.25)
100+, $1.15 each (non-members $2.15)

When ordering, please cite Item Number 1809912.